

October 24, 1995 Briefing

Corporate and Political Leaders Rally to Support Increase in American Students in Japan

*Endorse Project to Address Growing Concerns of
Americans' Inability to Compete with Japanese Peers*

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Washington, DC -- In a bi-partisan effort, Senator Richard G. Lugar, (R-IN) and Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WVA) met with a group of top corporate executives and government officials at the US Capitol tonight to urge them to support plans to send more American students to Japan. Currently, for every American going to Japan, 20 Japanese study in the United States. Both senators stressed that this puts the US at a competitive disadvantage. Senator Rockefeller stated that the imbalance ". . . deprives our young people of extraordinary opportunities."

Senator Lugar argued that ". . . back channel politics has worked well through the years....now we want to make certain there is a very large network of [US] students [studying in Japan] and that we have that kind of bridge that makes the difference."

Dr. Joseph D. Duffey, Director, US Information Agency and The Honorable Takakazu Kuriyama, Ambassador of Japan, among others, presented their support for this idea. Ambassador Walter F. Mondale, US Ambassador to Japan, stated in his message to the group, "We need to ensure that our young people

are prepared to assume leadership roles in all aspects of our trade, security, cultural and educational relationship with Japan." Senator Mike Mansfield, former Ambassador to Japan, who has characterized the US-Japan relationship as the most important in the world, also attended the briefing.

Recent surveys have found that the three greatest barriers for American students in choosing Japan for a year of study are lack of: money; information and knowledgeable faculty mentors.

A coalition of public and private organizations, including Earlham College, Association of American Colleges & Universities, The Laurasian Institution, CULCON, and others, has mounted a new program known as the Bridging Project to overcome these obstacles.

The Bridging Project is designed to recruit students for study in Japan and provide them information and support services, such as visa facilitation, housing, transfer of credit and counseling, develop suitable courses of study and build curriculum relating to Japan in US institutions.

Northwest Airlines announced a generous pledge of \$1.5 million in airfare earmarked for these students. Several other aspects of the Bridging Project are currently funded and underway, including a World Wide Web site on information on study abroad in Japan.

The Bridging Project is expected to be highlighted in discussions between President Clinton and Prime Minister Murayama during the US-Japan Summit meetings scheduled for November in Tokyo.